

BLUEPRINTS FOR MICHIGAN DOWNTOWNS

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING A SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION PACKET 2007

In a continuing effort to impact the development and revitalization of Michigan's traditional downtowns, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and the Michigan Municipal League (MML) are continuing on with a fifth year of the Blueprints for Michigan's Downtowns program.

WHAT IS BLUEPRINTS FOR MICHIGAN'S DOWNTOWNS?

The MSHDA will contract with a consultant to create downtown action strategies for up to ten Michigan communities. The consultant will be a recognized consulting firm that specializes in the economic enhancement of traditional downtowns.

Blueprints takes a comprehensive, market-driven approach toward developing an action-oriented, downtown economic enhancement strategy. The prime objective of Blueprints is to develop an action strategy that will, over a five-year period of implementation time, move forward your community's traditional downtown toward economic enhancement. Measurable results that will be tracked include the creation of new private jobs and private investment in the downtown. Process of the Blueprints program will be highly inclusive utilizing local volunteers and town hall meeting formats, will take approximately three months, per community, to complete and will result in the issuance of an action strategy.

The Blueprint consultant for the last four years has been HyettPalma, they have completed blueprints for Michigan downtown communities in partnership with the MSHDAs Community Assistance Team (CATEam), MSHDA and MML staff.

HOW MANY COMMUNITIES WILL BE SELECTED?

Allowing ourselves selection flexibility based on how many applicants we receive from the different population categories, we will use the following chart as a guide in selection. It is anticipated that a total of 10 communities will be selected.

1. **Five** communities under a population of **7,500**
2. **Two** communities from a population size of **7,501 – 15,000**
3. **Two** communities from population size of **15,001 – 30,000**
4. **One** community with a population size of **30,001+**

WHAT IS THE COST TO THE COMMUNITY?

Blueprints is a 50/50 match grant.

1. Community population size **under 7,500 will pay \$15,000**
2. Communities between **7,501 – 15,000 will pay \$20,000**
3. Communities in population size between **15,001 – 30,000 will pay \$25,000**
4. A community over **30,001 will pay \$32,500**

If your community is selected to be one of the ten Blueprint communities, the community must pay the full 50% share to the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) *prior* to the commencement of the Blueprint Orientation meeting.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Any city, township or village that maintains an active, downtown business organization and has a traditional downtown.

WHAT IS A TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN?

A grouping of 20+ commercial parcels of property that includes multi-story buildings of historical or architectural significance, the area must have been zoned, planned or used for commercial development for 50+ years, the area must consist of, primarily, zero-lot-line development, the area must have pedestrian friendly infrastructure, the area must have an appropriate mix of business and services and the area must be represented by a specific, downtown business organization like a Downtown Development Authority or Business Improvement District.

WHAT COMMUNITY MIGHT BE A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR BLUEPRINTS?

A community that is experiencing deterioration and/or stagnation of its downtown, over an extended period of time, but has the new energy and community commitment for the revitalization of their downtown. The successful candidate must also be prepared to pay half of the consultant fees, before the project begins, and to provide assistance and volunteer hours through a Process Committee. (Please note that, once selected, each community and the consultant will discuss their Process Committee's optimum composition.) Finally, and most importantly, the successful candidate must demonstrate a willingness and organizational ability to implement the action strategy over the next five years, and commit to making annual statistical progress reports to the MSHDA.

2007 BLUEPRINT PROCESS

In order to be considered as a 2007 Blueprint Applicant, a **Letter of Intent** is due to our office by **5:00 p.m. on March 2, 2007**. This letter of intent should consist of a statement that the community is intending on applying to become a 2007 Blueprint Community, identify community support, and executed by a local authorized official.

Upon receipt of the community's letter of intent, the MSHDA CATEam will send a letter inviting the community to complete the application process. The **Application Packet** will be due by **5:00 p.m. on May 4, 2007**. In order to meet the program application requirements, the community must prepare a bound response that includes the following points, in numerical order:

1. The municipality's elected body must pass a resolution pledging the 50% local match (please articulate the exact 50% dollar amount in the resolution), and include this support resolution as part of your application packet. If your community is selected, checks from you for your 50% contribution must be made payable and delivered to the MSHDA before commencement of the Blueprint Orientation meeting.
2. Provide a brief narrative identifying key community issues as related to the downtown's history, success and challenges. Within this narrative, you must address the following specific points:
 - A) Why does your downtown need a Blueprint now?
 - B) Why should your downtown be selected over other competitors?
 - C) List all existing organizations that currently work on downtown development issues in your community.
 - D) Identify key regional competition centers to the downtown (nearby commercial strips and/or nearby towns).
 - E) Complete a statement that demonstrates your community's unique commitment to a downtown revitalization effort.
3. Identify commitment from stakeholders within the community willing to set up a Process Committee that will actively meet with the consultant, help drive the process, provide significant volunteer hours during the planning process and remain intact as an implementation, monitoring and reporting agent during the five years of implementation.
4. Provide a map outlining the proposed Blueprint project area of your traditional downtown. In addition, overlay all other downtown district boundaries (DDA District, Brownfield District, Main Street Area, Historic Districts, Cool City Grant area, NEZ, Renaissance Zone, etc.) on the map.
5. Provide letters of commitment to the three-month planning process that specifically identify sources of money, in-kind services and volunteer hours from

individuals and/or individual entities who are community and/or regional stakeholders in the downtown's successful revitalization efforts. (An example: Rotary club commits three volunteers to work three hours doing phone surveys as part of the process.)

6. Provide letters from downtown business owners, downtown building owners, municipal and regional business entities and leaders, groups, chambers, churches, etc. supporting the Blueprint effort to revitalize the downtown.
7. Provide a list showing all economic development tools and incentives currently in place that have in the past, or may in the future, specifically assist in the revitalization efforts of the downtown.
8. Provide a statement of commitment to provide annual monitoring and reporting, to the MSHDA's CATeam, over the five-year implementation period.
9. Provide information regarding when your downtown last completed a formal market study and/or conducted a strategic planning or master planning process?
10. Please provide strong evidence of specific, professional organizational names and official titles and names of those who will implement the Blueprint Action strategy over the next five years.
11. Provide a list of potential economic development and revitalization projects that may be coming to the specific Blueprint area. Please provide two lists: proposed private projects and proposed public projects with brief summaries of each project.
12. Provide pictures of the downtown and proposed Blueprint area.

WHAT MUST WE COMMIT TO IN TERMS OF FIVE YEAR FOLLOW UP TO THE PLAN?

The community's Process Committee will be responsible for monitoring, documenting and reporting the community's five-year implementation of the Downtown Blueprint. Annual statistical reports will be due to the MSHDA's CATeam over the five-year period of time. The annual report to the MSHDA must include:

The data is to reflect information from within the specific downtown area included as part of the Blueprint program. Do not measure data from the municipality as a whole:

- 1) State Equalized Value
- 2) Taxable Value
- 3) # of new jobs created over last year
- 4) # of jobs lost over the last year

- 5) % of total Blueprint area space utilized by retail businesses
- 6) Current occupied retail space (sq. ft.)
- 7) Current vacant retail space (sq. ft.)
- 8) Current occupied office space (sq. ft.)
- 9) Current vacant office space (sq. ft.)
- 10) Current occupied residential space (sq. ft.)
- 11) Current vacant residential space (sq. ft.)
- 12) # of current housing units
- 13) # of current total businesses
- 14) # of new businesses opened in last year
- 15) # of businesses closed over last year
- 16) List current economic tools and incentives utilized in last year
- 17) List public infrastructure improvements and cost in last year
- 18) Dollar amount of private sector investment over last year
- 19) DDA (or other) downtown organizational budget.

PLEASE NOTE: IF SELECTED AS A BLUEPRINT COMMUNITY, YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO FILL OUT THIS STATISTICAL LIST AS PART OF THE BLUEPRINT START UP KIT. THIS WILL PROVIDE US AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY YOUR COMMUNITY, WITH A DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION BASELINE ASSESSMENT.

HOW BIG OF A DOWNTOWN AREA CAN THE BLUEPRINT COVER?

If you are one of the state's larger downtowns, your proposed Blueprint area should represent a specific, manageable and strategically targeted area of your downtown. Otherwise, an entire smaller or medium-sized commercial downtown area is an appropriate blueprint area.

WHO IS THE CONSULTANT?

At this time, we do not know. The MSHDA will be conducting a bidding process to select the best consultant possible to work on the Blueprints program for the next year. HyettPalma was selected as the consultant for the first four years of the Blueprint program and worked under a two year contract that now must be re-bid.

MAY I SELECT ANOTHER CONSULTANT?

No. MSHDA will select a consultant, so that we may all enjoy an economies-of-scale benefit through the selection of one consultant to conduct all ten action plans. This also provides a certain continuity and measurability to the overall program. Consultant selection will be achieved through a competitive bid process.

HOW LONG WILL THE BLUEPRINT PLANNING STAGE TAKE?

The planning process itself will take approximately three months per community. It is anticipated that implementation of the action strategy will take five years.

WHEN WILL THE BLUEPRINTS TAKE PLACE?

A mandatory Blueprint Orientation meeting will be held for all ten selected Blueprint communities in September 2007. All checks for the local dollar match must be received by MSHDA on the day of the orientation meeting.

WHOM CAN I CALL FOR ASSISTANCE?

The MSHDA's CATeam. Please see attached CATeam territory map for name and phone numbers of the CATeam person who represents your area of the state.

WHAT IS THE SELECTION CRITERIA?

A committee made up of MSHDA CATeam and MSHDA officials will score the applications. Scoring will be based on the answers to the specific criteria listed within this document.

WHEN WILL THE “BLUEPRINT” GRANTS BE AWARDED?

Communities will be announced in late June 2007.

WHO WERE THE BLUEPRINT COMMUNITIES FROM YEAR ONE OF THE PROGRAM?

Petoskey, Tecumseh, Charlevoix, Muskegon Heights, Township of Oscoda, Grass Lake, Big Rapids, East Tawas, Vassar, Romeo, Utica, Whitehall, Iron River, Imlay City, Adrian, Battle Creek, Buchanan, Brighton, Cheboygan, Davison, Grand Haven, Jonesville, Middleville, Mt. Pleasant, Norway, Highland Park, Charlotte, Howard City, Ionia, Wayland, Imlay City, Linden, Saline, Fremont, Menominee and Houghton. All have experienced a variety of successes resulting from their Blueprint Action Strategies and the process itself. Results range from new private developments in their downtowns to Councils and Boards re-focused and committed to downtown revitalization issues. And much more! We encourage you to contact them for their insight into the benefits of the Blueprint program.